6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

[QUOTE FROM Rev. Heyde] [Punjab Gazetteer,

Chapter III, B. Social and Religious Life.

Religion of Láhaul and Spiti.

in Mandi. Both males and females of the Buddhists make frequent pilgrimages to Triloknáth and Rewálsir. In honour of these and other Buddhist saints they celebrate a number of annual festivals, at which a great deal of *chóng* (an intoxicating drink made from barley) is consumed by both *lámás* and laymen.

"All Láhauli *lámás* belong to the Drúkhpa sect; many of them are married, and possess houses and fields, and only live part of the winter in the monasteries. Almost every house contains a small family chapel, in which Sangyás is the principal image. It is furnished also with a few books, and daily offerings of the kind already described are made.

"As already said, there are a great many spirits or demons known as *lhás*, who are supposed to dwell in trees, rocks, or on the hill tops, and before whom the Buddhists (contrary to their religion) sacrifice sheep and goats.* In addition, they believe greatly in witches, sorcerers, and the evil eye, and have a host of other superstitions in common with all the other Láhaulis. The Buddhists, half-Buddhists, Lohárs, and Shipís, always eat up sheep or goats which chance to die from fatigue or disease; some of them eat also calves, oxen or *yáks* which die by a fall from rocks or otherwise, but this is done secretly. When at Keylang a calf happens to die in the morning, it remains where it fell the whole day, nobody touching it, but the dead body disappears certainly during the night. You see many bones, especially during winter, of such animals lying about near the villages, but dead asses and ponies only are left to the eagles and foxes. Slaughtering *yáks* during winter is still practised at Dárcha, Rerig and other villages above Keylang, but it is done very secretly, and nobody will acknowledge the fact. There is a small temple with the image of a *lhá* near Yanample. Every third year a *yák* is sacrificed there, the victim being supplied in turn by all the *kothís* of Láhaul. This custom dates from the time of the Kúlu Rájas, who (as the god is said to be the same as that of the Dungri temple near Manáli, in Kúlu) ordered that one buffalo was to be offered (as at Dungri) every third year. Since Láhaul has become British territory, *yáks* have taken the place of buffaloes. The Shipís eat the flesh of the sacrified *yák*.

"As there are in Láhaul at least three religions, which have influenced each other in many ways for a long time, the manners and customs of the Láhaulis are of a very varied and mixed description, and it is difficult to ascertain where many of them originated. With regard to sobriety, veracity, fidelity to the marriage tie, and in other ways, the morals, both of the Buddhists and half-Buddhists of Láhaul, are deplorably loose, but nevertheless they stick to their different religions with a tenacity that gives till now little hope for the spread of Christianity among them."†

Religious ceremonies connected with agriculture.

The Láhaulis observe certain ceremonies of a religious nature in connection with the cultivation of their fields. A *lámá* who understands the astrological books, names the auspicious day in which ploughing should be commenced (this day falls always between the 8th and 22nd of May). After the fields have been ploughed and sown, a procession goes round all the fields, preceded by one or

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* *Srog machhat*, *i.e.* "Do not kill," is one of the first Buddhist commandments.

† Mr. Lyall writes: "The very tolerance of the Boti race in religious matters will, I think, be one obstacle to their conversion. In the Sunday services of the mission house I saw an old and learned *lámá*, who was living there to assist Mr. Jeschki in his Tibetan studies, join in the hymns and responses with great zeal and fervour. I do not think that either he or his friends saw any thing inconsistent in his so doing, though he had not the least intention of becoming a convert to Christianity. All worship is good, seemed to be his motto.

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

CHAPTER XXIII

Introduction to the Hemis Mystery Play

A DESCRIPTION of life in Ladak could not be complete without an account of one of the great annual festivals held in the monasteries in the valley, such as the *Gustor* (the offering on the ninth) at Trigtse and at Spitug, or the *Ghanggoni Thsedrup* (the fulfilment of life on the blue hill) at Peang, all of which take place in the winter, whilst the *Thseshu* is held at Hemis in the summer. The last is the most important, its chief feature being the presentation of the famous so-called " mystery play." The festival, as its name indicates, is held on the tenth day of the fifth Buddhist month, which is the birthday of Padma Sambhava, the founder of Lamaism, and still the presiding genius of the red sect. According to records in Sikkim, he was a magician who came north in the seventh century, and convinced the lamas of Tibet that he was sent as an incarnation of the Buddha. But into the pure Buddhism, he introduces the old *Bon Chos* with its devil-worship, and encouraged the most sensual practices, also the eating of meat and drinking of wine, asserting that over-indulgence in all these passions would lead to a state of high trance. Strangely enough, when we were waiting in the ante-room on a visit to the *Skushog*, this sentiment was exactly borne out by a Ladaki, who was participating in the native beer and already in rather an expansive mood. To our remark that it was not right to get drunk and lose control of mind and body, he replied that it was good, for the soul then became happy and blessed.